

# **PPM 530**

## **POSTSECONDARY TRAINING**

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### **CONTENTS**

#### **Purpose**

#### **Policies and Procedures**

- 530-01. Nature and Scope of Postsecondary Training Assistance**
- 530-02. Allowable Educational Expenses**
- 530-03. Criteria for Postsecondary Training Assistance**
  - 1. Mandatory Fees and Tuition**
  - 2. Room and Board**
  - 3. Books, Tools, and Other Training Materials**
    - Books, tools, and other training materials not required—**
    - Computer hardware, software, and services—Ordinary consumables—Equipment for non-mandatory coursework**
  - 4. Transportation**
  - 5. Dependant Care Expenses**
  - 6. Personal Expenses**
  - 7. Student Loan Fees and Payments**
- 530-04. Qualified Consumers**
- 530-05. Service Provider Standards**
  - 1. General Requirements**
  - 2. Institutions of Higher Education**
  - 3. Proprietary Schools**
  - 4. Industry-Certified Training Programs**
  - 5. Occupational Skills Training Programs**
  - 6. Correspondence and Distance Learning Programs**
- 585-06. Additional Service Provider Requirements**
  - 1. Least-Cost Provider**
  - 2. Gallaudet and NTID**
- 530-07. Student Financial Aid Requirements**

- 560-08. Maximum Efforts**
  - 1. Responsibility to Maintain Student Financial Aid Eligibility**
  - 2. Grant Award Refunds Owed and Loan Default**
  - 3. VR Counselor's Notification Responsibilities**
- 530-09. Academic Performance Expectations**
  - 1. Full-Time Enrollment**
  - 2. Acceptable Academic Standing**
  - 3. Incomplete Grades**
  - 4. Timely Submission of Grade Reports**
- 530-10. Funding Resource Utilization**
  - 1. Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**
  - 2. Federal, State, Institutional, and Private Student Aid Resources**
  - 3. VR Assistance**
  - 4. Federal Work Study (FWS) Earnings**
  - 5. Federal Student Financial Aid Loans**
  - 6. Merit-Based Scholarships and Awards**
- 530-11. Repeated Courses**
- 530-12. Elective Courses**
- 530-13. Summer Sessions**
- 530-14. Advanced Degrees**
- 560-15. Study Abroad**
- 530-16. Disability-Related Accommodations and Supports**
- 530-17. Developmental and Remedial Courses**
- 530-18. Tutoring**
- 530-19. Criteria for Determining Commuting Student Status**
- 530-20. Postsecondary Training IPE Requirements**

## **PURPOSE**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides monetary assistance and supports for the allowable educational expenses of postsecondary training for qualified consumers so that they can achieve their planned employment outcomes.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.1(b); 361.46(a)(2)(i);  
361.48(a); 361.50(a)]

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **530-01. Nature and Scope of Postsecondary Training Assistance**

VR can provide assistance for postsecondary training required to achieve the employment outcome of an approved individualized plan for employment (IPE), including assistance needed to obtain:

1. an academic degree or
2. vocational skills certificate required for employment;
3. selected coursework necessary to develop, update, or improve specific occupational skills and competencies required for work; or
4. industry-recognized licensing, certification, or other necessary credentialing.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.1(b); 361.13(c)(i) and (iii); 361.46(a)(2)(i); 361.48 and 361.48(f); 361.50(a)]

### **530-02. Allowable Educational Expenses**

As appropriate to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of each consumer, and in accordance with the policies described in this chapter, VR assistance can be provided to meet allowable educational expenses, including the increased costs to the consumer for training-related:

1. mandatory fees;
2. tuition;
3. room and board, if required;
4. course-specific books (required textbooks), tools, and other training materials;

5. increased costs incurred for necessary transportation;
6. additional dependent care expenses; and/or
7. personal expenses, to the extent that these represent necessary additional personal expenses incurred by reason of the consumer's participation in the training program.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.1(b); 361.13(c)(i) and (iii);  
361.46(a)(2)(i); 361.48 and 361.48(f); 361.50(a)]

### **530-03. Criteria for Postsecondary Training Assistance**

To the extent that necessary allowable educational expenses incurred by the consumer for approved training cannot be paid for with personal and family resources, grants, scholarships, and other gift aid, and other comparable services and benefits resources, VR will help meet the costs of training in accordance with the following criteria.

#### **1. Mandatory Fees and Tuition**

VR assistance to meet mandatory fees and tuition costs will not exceed the published fees and tuition costs of the training institution or program attended, or the approved reasonable fees established by VR, as amended annually, whichever is less.

#### **2. Room and Board**

A. VR assistance for room and board will not exceed the amount documented:

- for institutional room and board, by a bill from the training institution or an institutionally contracted private vendor; or
- for private housing (other than the consumer's own residence), by a copy of a rental or lease agreement, a written statement from a landlord specifying the number of individuals

sharing the living space, and a paid receipt from the landlord (or a copy of the cancelled check made payable to the landlord) for the consumer's portion of the rent paid.

B. Since consumers who commute reside at home and do not incur additional room and board expenses for training, VR will not authorize housing or meal assistance for any consumer who is a commuting student, as described in section [530.19](#) of this chapter.

### 3. Books, Tools, and Other Training Materials

VR assistance is available only for the costs of books, tools, and other training materials required for courses in which the consumer is enrolled. Assistance for books, tools, and other training materials must meet the following criteria.

A. VR will not assist with the purchase of any books, tools, or other training materials (such as dictionaries and other general references, Cliff Notes™ and comparable study aids, or similar materials) that are not required by published course descriptions or syllabuses.

B. VR assistance is not made available for the purchase of personal computer (PC) hardware, software, or services, unless PC hardware, software, or services are specifically:

- required for all students by the training institution or program attended, as documented by a published student handbook, or
- for the particular course taken, as documented by a published course description or syllabus; or
- are necessary assistive technology (AT), to accommodate the specific disability-related needs of the consumer with respect to the training, based on an AT evaluation that has established the nature and scope of the individual consumer's needs; AND

- the consumer does not already have a PC, software, and services adequate to meet his or her training-related needs.

C. VR assistance is not available for the costs of ordinary consumables (such as pencils, pens, notebook paper, folders, binders, printer paper and ink cartridges, and similar supplies).

D. VR will not assist with the purchase of training equipment, supplies, or other materials related to coursework not required to meet the consumer's training objectives (such as specialized equipment for elective courses not required to achieve the consumer's approved training goal).

#### 4. Transportation

A. Transportation assistance for consumers in approved training programs will be authorized by VR:

- in the case of non-commuting students, for no more than one round trip between the consumer's place of residence and the institution attended per each term and those periods of time during which institutional housing is closed to students; or,
- for commuting students, for no more than one round trip between the consumer's place of residence and the institution, per day commuted.

B. The maximum dollar amount authorized for transportation will not exceed the actual cost of the transportation required in accordance with paragraph 4.A. of this section for the least-cost conveyance, based on applicable:

- published public transportation fare schedules; or
- private vehicle mileage, payable in accordance with the shortest-distance mileage determined using Rand McNally™,

multiplied by the current Indiana Department of Administration mileage rate payable for state employee travel.

C. Transportation will not be authorized by VR for postsecondary transportation costs if sufficient EFC or grants and other financial aid resources are sufficient to meet the allowable educational expenses for transportation.

## 5. Dependent Care Expenses

VR assistance for dependent care expenses for the care of dependent minors and other family members is available only if the consumer is the sole or primary caregiver and alternative dependent care is necessary to enable the consumer to participate in training.

## 6. Personal Expenses

VR assistance for personal expenses can be provided only to the extent that the consumer incurs additional personal expenses by his or her participation in the training program. VR assistance will not be authorized to meet postsecondary personal expenses if sufficient EFC or grants and other financial aid resources are available to meet the allowable costs to the consumer for personal expenses associated with training.

## 7. Student and Family Loans

VR does not require consumers to apply for or accept any student or family educational loan as a condition for obtaining VR postsecondary training assistance, and VR will not assist the consumer with loan fees or payments of any kind, including any costs for loan application, loan servicing, or the payment of loan principle, interest, or penalties.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.1; 361.13(c)(i), (iii) and (iv); 361.46(a)(2)(i); 361.48 and 361.48(f); 361.50(a); 361.53]

## **530-04. Qualified Consumers**

Postsecondary training assistance provided by VR is available, as described in this chapter:

1. for applicants participating in an extended evaluation, to help meet the costs of limited, short-term training only, if necessary to help the VR Counselor determine the individual's ability to benefit from training in terms of an employment outcome; and
2. for eligible consumers, as needed to obtain specific skills or credentialing required for job placement and employment in the employment outcome identified in the consumer's approved IPE.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6); 361.13(c)(i) and (ii); 361.42(d)(ii) and (f); (361.45(a)(2); 46(a)(2)(i); 361.48 and 361.48(f); 361.50(a)]

## **530-05. Service Provider Standards**

### **1. General Requirements**

All postsecondary training institutions and programs utilized must meet applicable statutory and regulatory accreditation, licensing, certification, health and safety, and accessibility standards.

### **2. Institutions of Higher Education**

Institutions of higher education must:

- A. be degree- or vocational certificate-granting institutions;
- B. participate in the federal student financial aid program; and
- C. be fully accredited by the appropriate regional accreditation authority recognized by the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Education Department (ED).



### 3. Proprietary Schools

Proprietary schools must be fully accredited by the Indiana Commission for Proprietary Education or the equivalent authority in the state in which they are located.

### 4. Industry-Certified Training Programs

Industry-certified training programs must be nationally recognized by the applicable industry and its manufacturers and employers as providing necessary competency skills.

### 5. Occupational Skills Training Programs

Occupational skills training programs must be recognized by local business and industry and/or utilized for training services by local Workforce Development programs or the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

### 6. Correspondence and Distance Learning Programs

Correspondence and distance learning programs must be administered under authority of an institution or program described in paragraphs 2 through 5 of this section.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.13(c)(1)(i) and (iii);  
361.48(f); 361.50(a); 361.51]

## **530-06. Additional Service Provider Requirements**

### 1. Least-Cost Provider

Consumers are expected to attend the local state-supported public training institution or program nearest their place of residence that is able to meet their training needs at the least cost possible for the VR program. A training institution or program other than the least-cost

provider (including a non-local, out-of-state, or private institution or program) can be considered only if:

A. a local state-supported public training institution cannot meet the consumer's training needs with respect to curriculum offered or available disability-related accommodations; or

B. another institution of the consumer's informed choice offers a comparable program at less or equal total cost to VR, including all allowable educational expenses, supporting services costs, and disability-related accommodations; or

C. the consumer agrees to pay all additional costs, including the costs of any additional disability-related accommodations and supports, transportation, and other related expenses.

## 2. Gallaudet and NTID

Gallaudet University or the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) qualify as the least-cost provider, and may be utilized, if required to meet the unique training and disability-related needs of consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.13(c)(1)(i) and (iii); 361.48(f); 361.50(a) and (b)]

### **530-07. Student Financial Aid Requirements**

No training or training-related services provided by any institution of higher education can be paid for with VR program funds unless maximum efforts have first been made by the consumer and the VR Counselor to secure all grant assistance and other comparable services and benefits available to pay for the training, whether in whole or in part. Please refer to PPM chapter 600-05 regarding other comparable services and benefits.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.48(f)]

## **530-08. Maximum Efforts**

### **1. Responsibility to Maintain Student Financial Aid Eligibility**

VR assistance for postsecondary training is conditional upon the consumer's maintenance of his or her own student financial aid eligibility.

A. The consumer will be deemed to have made the maximum efforts required by section 530-07 of this chapter to secure and maintain grant assistance for the costs of training if he or she has met the student financial aid application requirements described there and if, while a student, the consumer, maintains his or her eligibility for continued student financial aid by:

- maintaining satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the institution or program attended; and
- adhering to all other conditions required for enrollment, attendance, and student financial aid eligibility (such as observing all student codes of conduct and remaining drug free).

B. If failure to meet the academic or ethics standards described in this chapter results in the consumer's loss of student financial aid eligibility, further VR training assistance will not be made available until the consumer has re-established his or her eligibility in accordance with those standards.

### **2. Grant Award Refunds Owed and Loan Default**

Consumers who owe refunds on prior grants received or who are in an unresolved default status with respect to previous student financial aid loans are ineligible for further grant aid, and VR cannot assist with postsecondary training or training-related costs for those consumers. As may be applicable to the individual and his or her family, the consumer will be deemed to have made maximum efforts to obtain and maintain

student financial aid eligibility when new terms for the repayment of a refund due or for the repayment, deferment, or discharge of the defaulted loan have been successfully negotiated to the satisfaction of the U.S. Education Department or the lender. When such arrangements have been made and documented, VR assistance can be initiated or resumed.

### 3. The VR Counselor's Notification Responsibilities

The VR Counselor will be deemed to have made the maximum efforts required by section 530-07 if he or she has informed the consumer annually by counseling and guidance regarding the student financial aid application requirement and the responsibilities noted in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this section using appropriate modes of communication applicable to the consumer.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.48(f) ; sub-regulatory federal policy, RSA-PD-92-02 (Nov. 21, 1991)]

## **530-09. Academic Performance Expectations**

### 1. Full-Time Enrollment

Consumers participating in postsecondary training are expected to meet the full-time enrollment requirements of the institution or program attended, and to complete training within the usual and customary period of time, unless full-time attendance or timely completion is:

A. precluded by the individual's disability, responsibilities as caregiver to dependent minors or other family members, scheduling conflicts among the required courses offered, or employment needed to provide for basic living needs; or

B. not needed to satisfactorily complete the consumer's training program.

## 2. Acceptable Academic Standing

Consumers must maintain acceptable academic standing with the postsecondary institution or program attended. For the purpose of this policy, “acceptable academic standing” means, at a minimum:

A. a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or better on a 4.0 scale on an ongoing basis, or “passing” or “satisfactory” performance in programs for which a point or letter grade is not given; or

B. academic performance required to meet admissions and graduation requirements for the school within the degreed program required by the planned employment outcome. In addition, consumers with employment outcomes requiring graduate or post-graduate training must achieve at least the minimum admission standards for those curricula.

## 3. Incomplete Grades

The consumer is responsible for resolving any incomplete grade received for any course in accordance with the requirements established by the postsecondary training institution or program attended and the course instructor for receiving an acceptable final grade.

## 4. Timely Submission of Grade Reports

Final grade reports must be submitted by the consumer to the VR Counselor for each grading period completed prior to authorization being made for the subsequent term.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.13(c)(1)(i) and (iii); 361.39; 361.46(a)(5) and (6)(ii); 361.50(a)]

## **530-10. Funding Resource Utilization**

### **1. Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**

A. The expected family contribution (EFC) is an amount established by the student financial aid process, computed based on the FAFSA information provided by the student and the student's family, as the amount that the student and family are obligated to pay toward meeting the costs of education. VR requires that the student and family meet their EFC responsibility as their financial obligation toward paying for the allowable educational expenses of postsecondary training.

B. VR funds are not available to pay for any portion of the consumer's EFC.

C. VR has no authority to waive or amend the EFC, as determined by the financial aid process. Consumers disputing the EFC amount should consult the student financial aid office of the training institution or program attended to request that the EFC be re-computed.

### **2. Federal, State, Institutional, and Private Student Aid Resources**

A. All federal, state, institutionally provided, and private student financial aid grants, scholarships, and other gift awards received and specified as to use for allowable educational expenses must be so applied prior to the authorization of VR assistance.

B. VR has no authority to increase the amount of federal, state, institutional, or private aid for which the consumer is determined to be eligible by the respective funding sources. Consumer's disputing the amount of aid received should consult the student financial aid office of the training institution or program attended.

C. VR funds cannot be used in lieu of any financial aid grants, scholarships, or other comparable services and benefits for which the consumer is eligible.

### 3. VR Assistance

A. VR program assistance is available for postsecondary training expenses only as the last-dollar funding source, after the EFC computed based on the FAFSA information provided by the consumer and the consumer's family and all federal, state, institutional, and private grant, scholarship, and other gift aid resources have been applied to the consumer's allowable educational expenses.

B. Authorization for postsecondary training assistance can be made for only one term (semester or quarter) at a time.

### 4. Federal Work Study (FWS) Program Earnings

The federal work study (FWS) program is part of the federal student financial aid program available to qualifying students to help meet educational expenses. VR policy does not require consumers to participate in the FWS or any other work study. If the consumer chooses to participate in work study, the training institution will consider work study earnings as available resources to be applied toward educational expenses; however, work study earnings will not be used to calculate the amount of VR assistance made available.

### 5. Federal Student Financial Aid Loans

VR does not require any consumer to apply for or accept any student or parental financial aid loan offered through the financial aid application process; however, consumers and their families may need to apply for and accept student loan assistance in order to fulfill their EFC obligation. If the student or the student's family chooses to apply for and accept any student loan, VR will not consider student loans received as resources when calculating the amount of VR assistance for which the consumer qualifies, but the student or family, as applicable, are responsible for the payment of all loan fees, servicing, principal, interest, and penalties (see also section [530-03.7](#) of this chapter).

## 6. Merit-Based Scholarships and Awards

Scholarships awarded based on merit and not specified as to use are not considered comparable services and benefits resources, and may be used as the consumer chooses.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations, 34 CFR 361.5(b)(10) ; sub-regulatory federal policy, RSA-PD-92-02 (Nov. 21, 1991)]

### **530-11. Repeated Courses**

Required courses that must be repeated because they have been failed, dropped after the add/drop date of the institution or program, or for other reasons must be repeated at the expense of the consumer, unless the failing grade or withdrawal was clearly due to justifiable circumstances identified and approved by the VR Counselor, such as a lengthy hospitalization or other cause resulting in the inability of the consumer to attend classes, take exams, or perform the work required for successful course completion.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a)]

### **530-12. Elective Courses**

VR will assist with the costs of elective courses needed to complete a degree program. For electives outside the prescribed coursework, VR will help with the costs of tuition and books only, but will not assist with the costs of course-specific fees, tools and other training materials, or the costs of related tutoring services.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a)]



### **530-13. Summer Sessions**

VR assistance for summer school is provided on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with directives issued by the Director of VR.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a)]

### **530-14. Advanced Degrees**

VR assistance can be provided for graduate or postgraduate studies only if an advanced degree is the minimum qualification required to achieve the consumer's approved employment outcome.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a); federal sub-regulatory policy, RSA-PD-97-04 (August 19, 1997)]

### **530-15. Study Abroad**

Study outside the United States may be supported only when it is a required part of a domestic training program in which the consumer is enrolled. When foreign studies are anticipated, the IPE must be submitted for prior approval to the appropriate Region Manager.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a)]

### **530-16. Disability-Related Accommodations and Supports**

State-funded training institutions and programs are responsible for providing reader services for consumers who qualify. The costs of other required disability-related accommodations and supports are authorized as appropriate and necessary, in accordance with applicable VR policies. Such costs are separate from, and in addition to, the assistance permitted for allowable educational expenses, and will not be applied against any maximum costs or reasonable fees permitted for allowable educational expenses assistance.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.5(b)(5); 361.39; 361.48; 361.50(a)]

### **530-17. Developmental and Remedial Courses**

VR assistance for developmental and remedial courses can be provided as necessary, if required or recommended by the training institution or program for the consumer and subject to satisfactory progress being made toward achievement of the training objective. See also section [530-18.3](#) of this chapter.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.39; 361.50(a)]

### **530-18. Tutoring**

1. VR assistance for tutoring outside the regular training setting on a one-on-one or small group basis may be provided for a course when:

A. the course instructor, academic advisor, or disabled student services office has indicated that the consumer is at risk of failing the course and has recommended tutoring; and

B. the postsecondary training institution or program does not provide the required tutoring services.

2. Tutoring must be provided by a qualified individual recommended by the course instructor, academic advisor, or disabled student services office.

3. VR will not help with the costs of tutoring:

A. for any developmental or remedial courses, or when institutional student supports are provided; or

B. merely to enable a consumer to raise already satisfactory academic performance.

4. As a guideline, tutoring provided should not exceed one hour of tutoring per each full hour of in-class instruction. The rate paid for tutoring cannot exceed the prevailing tutoring rate paid for tutors by the postsecondary institution or training program in which the consumer is enrolled.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.50(a)]

## **530-19. Criteria for Determining Commuting Student Status**

### **1. Definition for Commuting Student**

A consumer will be considered to be a commuting student for purposes of room and board assistance and transportation costs under section [530-03](#) of this chapter if:

A. commuting is not precluded by disability, work schedule, or other required activities, or

B. adequate public or private transportation alternatives are readily available and accessible to meet consumer's transportation needs, or

C. the consumer resides within a reasonable distance and travel time from the nearest appropriate training site, or

D. the consumer otherwise qualifies as a non-commuting student but chooses to commute to and from the training site with the approval of the VR counselor.

### **2. Concurrent Authorization for Both Room and Board and Daily Commuting Costs Disallowed**

VR will not authorize both room and board and daily commuting costs for the same consumer for the same term.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations,  
361.13(c)(i); 361.39; 361.50(a)]

## **530-20. Postsecondary Training IPE Requirements**

1. The IPE for every consumer participating in postsecondary training must specify that VR program assistance is conditional upon the consumer's:

A. maximum efforts to secure and maintain grant assistance and other comparable services and benefits, as described in this chapter;

B. maintaining required academic achievement standards, including the satisfactory academic progress standards of the institution or program attended, the cumulative GPA standards required by the VR program, and the admissions requirements for graduate and postgraduate studies, as applicable;

C. timely submission of official grade reports to the VR Counselor for each term completed;

D. adherence to all applicable codes of student conduct of the institution or program attended; and

E. contacting the VR Counselor at least once each term to report progress, and promptly whenever there is a change in assistance needs due to

- withdrawal from the training program,
- adding or dropping a course,
- transfer to a different training institution or program, or
- change of academic major.

2. Failure of the consumer to abide by any of the requirements described in this section may result in denial or termination of VR assistance for postsecondary training.

[AUTHORITY: State agency policy per federal regulations, 361.13(c)(i); 361.46(a)(5) and (6)(ii); 361.50(a)]

